

(Tele) Travelling through Art: A Case Study of a Telecollaborative Language Project with Very Young Learners

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Abstract

Language teaching in today's society highlights the need to redefine concepts such as literacy and communicative competence, not only in language education but across different fields of knowledge (e.g. Content and Language Integrated Learning; CLIL). Furthermore, project-based learning (PBL) is becoming an increasingly popular and fruitful approach to achieving this unity, wherein the very premise of learning is that it must have a purpose that goes beyond the walls of the classroom itself. In language education, Project-based Language Learning (PBL) can provide a means of 'connecting the dots' between content and language knowledge and application of knowledge; the students' come to see the relevance of their learning in various disciplines while contributing to community and society. PBL –especially when combined with Web 2.0– is a powerful tool for enhancing the integrative development of linguistic, audiovisual and digital competences as well as the proficiencies linked to cross-disciplinary knowledge. As the perspective of education shifts from notions of 'fragmented' areas of knowledge towards more comprehensive, cross-disciplinary, multiple-competence curricula, research and practice of integrative approaches is essential for the field of language education.

With these parameters in mind, a research project PADS (EDU2010-17859) was designed to experiment and evaluate methodological PBL approaches devised to enhance the joint development of multiple competences through telecollaborative projects. The project is made up of participants with different complementary profiles: teacher educators (university level), practicing teachers (primary education), and primary education students. In this case, the pilot project began with very young learners (aged between 6 and 8) and was based around cross-disciplinary work concerning two artists who were well-known for each partner group (in Catalonia, Spain and Ontario, Canada). This presentation will outline the project design, output and preliminary results of the analysis.